

# Digital India: An Overview

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper seeks to emphasise the importance of the Digital India project. Digital India is a programme to transform India for a knowledge future. It is viewed as an umbrella, integrating various efforts around connectivity, skilling and digital governance. Its main objective was to connect and improve the lives of the people of India, provide adequate skills to engage with the digital economy, reform the interaction between the citizens and the government and aims at improving the delivery of government services. The main objectives of the programme have been highlighted along with its main pillars. Challenges in the implementation of the programme have also been referred to here, along with the necessary solutions that can act as a proper remedy to the problem.

**KEY WORDS:** Digital India, Digital empowerment of citizens, e-Governance, e-services, Knowledge economy, Digital literacy.

## I. INTRODUCTION:

This paper is an overall analysis of the paramount project named 'Digital India'. Its main objective is to show how the government of India has planned to modify India for the better. The paper thus seeks to highlight the aims and objectives of digital India, along with its main initiatives and relevant nine pillars. Though the programme is unparalleled in respect of its scope and utility, there are several challenges which are faced during its execution. So the challenges have also been addressed in this paper with some possible remedies to make this project a successful one.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:** The study has been carried out with the help of secondary data only. All the data has been collected from various sources such as social media platforms and reports published and have been compiled as per the need of the study.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Since the study is mainly based on the secondary data, different websites and research articles have helped in gathering information and

data. The studies of the websites have helped with relevant knowledge and information. The articles referred have added to the knowledge on the policies of digital India as a whole, its aims and objectives in particular. Moreover, the articles have also helped in gaining knowledge about the different initiatives and pillars of digital India. The overall discussions about the challenges and solutions in implementing the programme have also been guided by the discussions in different articles.

Digital India mission launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015 is a flagship programme of the Government of India with the aim to transform the country into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. It was a campaign launched by the Government of India in order to guarantee the availability of government services electronically to the citizens of the country by developed online infrastructure and by increasing internet connectivity or making the country digitally powerful in the field of technology. Digital India mission mainly emphasized on three key areas:

- A. Digital infrastructure as a utility to every citizen.
- B. Governance and services on demand.
- C. To look after the digital empowerment of every citizen.

**OBJECTIVES:** 'The Power to Empower' being the main motto of Digital India mission, there are other three core components of the Digital India initiative. These are digital infrastructure creation, digital delivery of services and the digital literacy. Among the major objectives of this programme one can identify few of the followings:

1. All gram panchayats are to be provided with high-speed internet connections.
2. All localities are to be provided with easy access to Common Service Centre.
3. Digital India is an initiative that includes within it a larger number of ideas and thoughts into a single and all-comprehensive vision so that each of them can be seen as a part of a larger goal.

4. The programme also emphasizes on restructuring some of the existing schemes that can be implemented in a co-ordinated manner.

**DIGITAL INDIA INITIATIVES:** Many initiatives have been taken up by the government of India under the Digital India campaign. Few can be referred to here like —

Digilocker and UMANG — digilocker services are integrated into umang to minimise paper use and provide anytime and anywhere, authentic and secure access to documents.

E-Hospitals — is a Hospital Management Information System which is a readymade solution in connecting patients, doctors and hospitals through a single digital platform.

E-Pathshala — developed by National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), e-pathshala displays and arranges all educational e-resources like text books, audio, video, periodicals and different types of print and non-print materials through the website and the mobile app.

BHIM — Bharat Interface for Money is an app which makes payment transactions easier and quicker by using Unified Payments Interface (UPI). INDIAai — is the central hub for everything in India and beyond. The National AI Portal of India creates and nurtures a unified AI ecosystem to drive perfection and leadership in knowledge creation and AI to promote economic growth.

MyGov.In — is a platform to share inputs and ideas or matters of policy and governance. It helps in the engagement of the citizens in the governance by 'Discuss', 'Do', 'Disseminate' approach.

eSign Framework — this would help any users to digitally sign a document online using Aadhaar authentication.

Swachh Bharat Mission mobile app — this will help organizations and citizens to gather information regarding the cleanliness drive and help in achieving the goals of the mission.

**NINE PILLARS OF DIGITAL INDIA:** Following are the nine pillars of digital India —

**Broadband Highways:** This programme was launched by the government of India to offer broadband to 2,50,000 gram panchayats. In this programme the networks were planned to integrate with cloud infrastructure in order to offer cloud services and to make available high speed internet connectivity to gram panchayats.

**Universal Access to Mobile Connectivity:** By this programme, it has been planned to penetrate network connectivity and provide

seamless mobile network connectivity to fill up gaps in the country.

**Public Internet Access Programme:** This programme was launched with the objective to convert post offices as multi service centre and starting Common Service Centres (CSC) all over the nation. It was intended to increase the number of CSCs to 2,50,000 in order to have a CSC per village in the nation. The department of post was vested with the responsibility of converting 1,50,000 post offices as multi-service centres.

**e-Governance:** This is an initiative of reforming government processes with the help of information technology. This digital initiative emphasises on reforming government processes to make those more simple, easy and effective.

**e-Kranti:** This aims to provide smooth accessibility to all government services to all the people irrespective of any locality within the nation. There were various projects under consideration by the government of India to transform e-governance and mobile governance. This programme integrates government services through cloud services and deliver services through mobile and helps in fast-tracking and approval for the government projects.

**Information for All:** This is a major initiative by the government where the development of an open data platform was started by the government in order to provide various projects and its related data to all the people of the nation through the internet platform (data.gov.in). The government launched a website — MyGov.in to help in engagement of the citizens to get their valuable suggestions through the online platform and social media.

**Electronics Manufacturing:** This initiative was launched to promote electronic manufacturing so that electronic imports from other countries like China can be reduced.

**IT for Jobs:** This emphasises on the skill development of the youths and placing them in the IT sector. Government also plan to offer IT training to the youth population even in the villages and towns.

**Early Harvest Programmes:** Early harvest programmes consists of those projects which are to be implemented within short time line. Some of the projects include — biometric attendance for employees, IT platform for Messages, standardize government e-mail design, e-books implementation in schools, public Wi-Fi hotspots, Wi-Fi in all universities, SMS based weather information, disaster alerts etc.

**Table 1: Nine Pillars of Digital India**

|                          |   |                                  |
|--------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| Broadband highways       | Universal access to mobile connectivity | Public internet access programme |
| e-governance             | e-Kranti                                | Information for all              |
| Electronic manufacturing | IT for jobs                             | Early harvest programmes         |

**CHALLENGES:** Though there is no doubt regarding the significance of the digital India programme, but there are a number of challenges faced while implementing the programme. Below mentioned are some of the challenges faced —

1. Lack of infrastructure: Huge amount of investment and infrastructure are required to connect every village with high speed internet. But the infrastructural problem makes it difficult to do so.
2. Poor connectivity: India needs over 80 lakhs hotspot compared to the availability of about 31,000 hotspots approximately at present.
3. Regulatory road block: Some of the common policy huddles includes lack of clarity. The issues related to taxation have proved to be road blocks in advancing the programme.
4. Digital illiteracy: Most of the citizens in general and those of the rural areas in particular still does not have adequate knowledge about internet and its usages.
5. Cyber crime: This is the biggest threat to the people of the nation. Since there are not adequate internet privacy laws, people often get exposed to cyber crimes.
6. Digital divide: The mission of digital India has unfortunately ended up in creating a digital divide between those who are digitally well equipped and those who are not so.
7. Idle government RFPs: Many Request for Proposals (RFPs) issued by the government are not being seriously taken up and addressed by competent private sector organizations due to lack of commercial viability.
8. Policy making: Lack of proper policy making is also a problem in the implementation of the digital India programme.
9. Issue of language: India is a country where there are people speaking different languages. Non availability of the digital services in all the local languages is a major challenge in the advancement of the digital India programme.
10. Net neutrality: The accessibility of internet to each and every citizen of India is also major challenge in the implementation of the programme.

**REMEDIES:** Though challenges are many, some remedies in the form of the followings can be suggested to meet the challenges —

1. Government have to set up authorised training institute in each state for enriching the digital literacy and awareness level of the citizens.
2. Government have to arrange nationwide seminar to make people conscious about the digital services.
3. Advertisement on the policies of digital India needs to be published in books, news papers, Televisions and radios to help people gain knowledge about it.
4. Active participation and co-ordination is required among various departments which deal with its implementation.
5. Availability of services in more than one language can be introduced for helping the common people.
6. Youths should be particularly inspired to make the programme more effective.
7. In order to reduce the cyber crime proper authentication of document should be done.
8. Every educational institute must arrange lectures to kindle interests in its policies and enhance its implementation.
9. Booklets of e-services can be printed along with pictures and can be distributed in each home for general awareness.
10. To start a nation wide toll free helpline number of digital India programme so that people can register their problems regarding e-services.

### III. CONCLUSION:

Along with many possibilities, the programme also created a “brand”, mirroring the Prime Minister’s own Jan Jan Modi, Ghar Ghar Modi of aspiration and all inclusive transformation reflected in the Prime Minister’s 2014 Independence Day speech — “Our dream is of a “Digital India”... for the poor and not just the elites. We aspire to provide each child, even in the most remote villages of the country, a sound education. We aim for every citizen to be able to use their phones to operate a bank account, to engage with the government, meet their day to day needs and conduct business on the go. And for this, we must embark on the journey toward Digital India”. It is true that there are some problems in the implementation of the programme due to lack

of proper legislature and policy or sometimes due to lack of adequate planning and foresight, but we must continue to take initiatives for the successful implementation of the programme.

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